

An abstract painting featuring dark, swirling colors like deep blue, black, and purple, with some lighter, organic shapes in shades of green and yellow. The overall effect is mysterious and textured, resembling a microscopic view or a dark, swirling landscape.

Autumn

beneath the

Circle

surface.

the S t a f f

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The Auburn Circle accepts works from students, staff and alumni of Auburn University. Prose, poetry, essays and articles should be typed. *The Auburn Circle* has access to IBM and Macintosh computers. It is preferred that artwork be submitted on slide, but originals are accepted. All original artwork remains in *The Auburn Circle* offices and is photographed to reduce risk of damage (all artwork will be returned upon request). We accommodate artwork of any size and shape. Original copies of photographs are required for submission. Collections of related works by artists or photographers are accepted for our Gallery section. All submissions become property of *The Auburn Circle* on a one-time printing basis, with reserved rights for possible reprinting of material at a later date.

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The Auburn Circle

Publications Suite, Foy Union Bldg.

Auburn University, AL 36849

Please include your name, phone number, address, and a 3-5 sentence bio with submissions.

Editor's Note

Not long ago, while rapidly remote-controlling my way down an elevator of television channels, I paused on a station that contained a face I recognized from three-dimensional life. It was Adrienne Rich on Bill Moyers' *Language of Life* special. Having interviewed her for this magazine two months before, I experienced the phenomenon of being personally familiar with the gestures and manner of speaking of someone on the screen. Because of this, I listened intensely to everything she said, as if for the first time I had realized that these screen images represented actual people and their individual words. There was a scene showing Adrienne autographing books and talking to students, much like she had done after her lecture/reading at Auburn. She advised them to always proof their own poetry when having it published. Hearing that, I decided that I, as an editor, should give artists and writers who submit to *The Auburn Circle* the opportunity to proof their work before publication. I have tried to do that with this issue and will continue to do it in the future.

This is very little compared to the things I learned from actually talking with Adrienne Rich, and I cannot thank Dr. Taylor Littleton enough for arranging my meeting with her. She has inspired me on many levels: artistic, intellectual, political, feminine, cultural. She is not someone who can be pinned into one facet of existence. Adrienne Rich and her poetry move freely throughout the spectrum of experience, and I am thrilled that *The Auburn Circle* has the opportunity to display her words on some of its pages. I hope everyone reads, enjoys, and learns from this interview.

Adrienne Rich made me aware of the necessity for an artist to not only exist as an individual but also to be part of a community of artists. You do not have to go all the way to New York or Santa Cruz to find that either. In our own community there is almost constant artistic activity that does not require you to be in any specific major. There is a poetry reading or open mic night somewhere almost every week. At Biggin Hall on Tuesday nights from 7:00 to 9:00 PM you can be a part of The Drawing Club. The Theatre and Music departments run performances, and Biggin Gallery and Foy Union Gallery hold art exhibits throughout the year. Dudley Hall contains exciting art work on the walls, in corners, in the elevator. You can attend a variety of lectures during the year; the Franklin Lecture series, which brought us Adrienne Rich, is an excellent one to follow. I believe that our campus has a thriving artistic community that is quite easy to access, and *The Auburn Circle* strives to be a part of it. I strongly encourage anyone interested to submit their work and/or join our staff. Enjoy!



The Auburn Circle, financed by advertising and student activity fees, serves as a forum for writers and artists within the university community. It aims to appeal to a diverse audience by providing a variety of short stories, poetry, art, and photography. *The Auburn Circle* is published three times a year - fall, winter, and spring - with an average distribution of 4,000 copies. The views expressed throughout the issue are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Auburn University Board of Student Communications, those companies advertising in *The Auburn Circle*, the editors and staff, Auburn University, or Auburn's administration and Board of Trustees. Auburn University 1995 Fall issue.

COLOPHON

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Cover artwork by Leigh Haffner.

title, red - a - v f - v a s. 29.5 x 100 inches

Cover design by * !

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Linda Da Silva is a Pre-Business major.

Jeremy M. Downes is a professor in the English department at Auburn University. His poems have appeared in *Poet Lore* and other publications.

Daniel J. Ennis, a graduate student in English at Auburn, recently published poems in *Aura* and *Elk River Review*. He dignifies his TV habit by calling it "Studies in Popular Culture."

Leigh Haffner is a senior in fine arts, concentrating in painting. A mother of two, she was internationally recognized by the **Liquitex** Excellence in Art Student Grant Program, and claims that despite the nature of her paintings she is, in fact, normal. She says, "If I want to make a statement I try to be more productive and creative through my experience of art, instead of using paper and adhesive on the bumper of my car." She has freckles.

Robert F. Lyon, former professor of art at Louisiana State University, is Head of the Art Department at Auburn. Not only has he been a recipient of numerous grants from organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, Sculpture Space, and Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, but he is also Founder and Editor in Chief of *The Sculpture News*. He was recently included in, among others, *Who's Who in American Art* and *Who's Who Worldwide*.

Jody Schnurrenberger graduated in Special Education/Behavior Disorders from Auburn University. She went out into the real world and did not find it to her liking, so she's just hanging around until she goes to Korea next Fall.

Jeanie Thompson has published several books of poetry including *How To Enter The River*, *Litany for a Vanishing Landscape*, and her newest book, *Witness*. She is Executive Director of the Alabama Writer's Forum located at the Auburn University Center for the Arts and Humanities, and she has received Individual Artist Fellowships in Literature from the Alabama State Council in the Arts and the Louisiana State Arts Council.

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chanson de coyote/ life and death in hollywood

♣ Daniel J. Ennis

"Nature is a temple whose living colonnades
Breathe forth a mystic speech in fitful sighs
Man wanders among symbols in those glades
Where all things watch him with familiar eyes."

—Baudelaire, *Flowers of Evil* (translated by Richard Wilbur)

I

Wile E. Coyote sat under the dim
 forty-watt bulb,
reading Rimbaud out loud to the brooding
 silence that night.
The agony of existence curdled
 in his swollen
stomach—twisting feeling consumed and fed
 taunting presence.
The Coyote was actor and poet.
 Creation? Pain.

II

The rough roar of a Harley broke
the night. Bugs skidded up, called
through the cruddy, cracked pane:
"What's up doc? The guys plan to take
up over at 'Runner's tonight—bald
Elmer, Porky, Pepe—it'll be insane."

Coyote sighed, tried to hide disdain.
"No...No...I've a Camus book to read,
my vers libre epic to write, a part
to study." Coyote thought of how Verlaine,
in the end, embraced decadence instead
of beauty, how society robbed Art.

"Suit yerself," laughed Bugs, turning to start
his Harley. "Farewell," said the Coyote,
as the bunny sped off to the night.
Wile E. closed the door, eyed the quart
of Chablis on the shelf, decided to dry out
tonight instead, seek purity so he could write.

III

Coyote tried to write but chaos reigned—
the party down the street beyond control.

He tried to read Boileau's *Lutrin* aloud—
the telephone's ring shook him from his chair.

He pressed the phone against his stalklike ear,
displeased, uttered "Bon Soir," and wiped his lips.

The cacophony crackled down the line
(the party fully swinging), drunk "meep-meep."

"Oh please don't call," Coyote said, "I need
to work." A muffled laugh, the clink of glass.

One more "meep-meep." Coyote gently placed
receiver back on hook, opened his book.

The phone again, again he was polite.
again "meep-meep," again aslur with drink.

Coyote hung up, firmer now, and found
his page. (Boileau sublime amid the noise).

The jangling phone again. Again. Again.
Again until he pulled it from the wall,

Its noise a final slurring, dying ring
as Wile E. tossed it through the dirty plate

glass window, clunk into the flower bed.
"All scents and sounds and colors meet as one."

IV

Wile E. Coyote began working for Warners
in 1935, playing bit parts
in cartoon shorts shown before features.

Acting his actuate, his fate,
he did anything at all
to stay working, reprised any role,

stunt doubled for dingo once in 1938,
played a possum in a 1944 propaganda film.
He translated French tragedies in spare time

and wrote long letters to Jean-Luc Godard,
detailing his dream of directing
a Racine retrospective.

When the war ended, Wile E. convinced
Jack Warner to finance a French
Looney Tune version of *Le Misanthrope*—

a failure with the matinee masses,
notable only for its noxious unpopularity
among film critics of the day. When Wile E's

Play On Proust was panned by the *Times* he
found himself routed to the Roadrunner
series—a role (it was said by agents) that required

simply “stunts and grunts.” Pretty soon
the others—Daffy, Porky, Pepe Le Pew—
began avoiding him, alienated by his work,

twitching their technicolor noses
at his thinning hide, talking surreptitiously
about the stench of TNT.

V

Vision of a steel safe dropping:

Black mass of hardness irresistibly cubic,
Square shadow growing larger, spreading steady, all sides moving
apart.
Dark borders widen, blanket the land in all directions.

Coyote's ears could hear the hiss of air a falling safe makes.
Coyote could sense the air scrambling to get out of the way.
Coyote, on cue, widened his yellow eyes,
Curved his long red mouth into a frown,
Bent his paw at wrist in wistful wave goodbye.

Impact.

VI

he broke into the duplex after
crouching
for hours
in bushes

waiting
 for the party
 to dwindle
 door
 gave
 with a second
 kick
 Wile E
 stepped through
 to the foyer
 Roadrunner
 passed out
 in his living room hot tub
 bottles
 scattered on the floor
 razors on the bar
 Tweety Bird face-down on the couch

 people bought
 roadrunner hats t-shirts lunch boxes pencils coloring books
 prophylactics action figures ammunition mud flaps
 the lithe bird careless
 with luxury
 Wile E. prowled
 into the living room
 lean and hungry
 Roadrunner
 shifted
 in sleep
 sloshed
 water on the marble floor
 barely had time
 to mutter
 meep-meep
 before the coyote
 red in tooth and claw
 lunged
 ripping aslant the long
 neck
 spitting blue feathers
 ravening mouth pulling
 back then quickly
 snapping thin
 bird-chest
 crushing fragile
 ribs
 piercing pulsing
 veins
 closing on clenching

heart
 preening
soul
 tearing it from shattered
chest
and in one motion
 flipping it into the air
 where
 it tumbled upward
 for a moment
whirling red and wet
 then fell with sodden smack
into the coyote's
upturned
jaws

Tweety
 stirred
came awake
 with a start
 scrambled
to tiny feet amid
 vials and cigarette butts
gasped
i tawt i taw—
Coyote
 snapped up the little
 yellow
 androgynous
 pest
with
 one
 quick
 bite

just on principle

VII

Coyote has done it—
blown up by Acme products,
hurtled from cliffs too many to mention,
plowed into the mesa for years
(great purpling buttes forgive none)—

his dignity eroded bit by bit
by years of bad luck,
defective explosives, lack of attention

to looming gorges, holding back tears
as the Roadrunner blazed into the setting sun.

VIII

The storm of feathers, bone and blood became
a silent snow of down. Coyote stood
amid the ruined roadrunner, his breath
a pant, his teeth a slick of red. The bird—
all legs and smirks in life, was now less than
a corpse, was now resting in pieces, now—
for lack of better term—inanimate.

A speechless beast, Coyote stood, all four
paws firm in cooling, sticky, red remains.
and blinked his black and rolling eyes. He sniffed.

Coyote smelled the death, growled, raised his head
(and one hind leg) and howled the moon.

IX

That's.
All.
Folks.



A Necessary Voice

an interview with Adrienne Rich.

Tuesday, May 9, 1995

CH: The first thing I want to ask you is when did you start writing, and what made you decide to write?

AR: Well, it wasn't a decision. I

was about four years old, and I had a lot of poetry in my childhood and a lot of music.

My mother read me poetry, my father encouraged me to write. In fact, he taught me to read and write

...I think that

my parents really hoped

that I was going to become a pianist,

but

I was from the beginning very much attracted to language

and what language could do and the power of language.

before I went to school by giving me pieces of poems, a verse of a poem by Blake or Keats or someone like that, to copy out and then I sort of absorbed the poetry while copying the letters. So those are some of my very earliest impressions of poetry. I remember [Blake's] "Tyger! Tyger! burning bright/ in the forests of the night, . . ." and that was sort of wonderful stuff to get into your ears at a very young age. And my father used to play the guitar and sing ballads like "the Man on the Flying Trapeze." My mother played the piano, and my father and his mother, who lived with us part of the year, had both learned reams of poetry in school, and we'd sort of have poem recitations. So it was a very natural environment for a child to be drawn into poetry. But there was also a lot of music, and I think that my parents really hoped that I was going to become a pianist, but I was from the beginning very much attracted to language and what language could do and the power of language. So as I say, I didn't make a decision; I was just writing poems from the time I was very young. And then when I got into high school I began to take it a good deal more seriously and study how other poets had written poems. I spent a summer reading all of Edna St. Vincent Millay's sonnets and writing sonnets and studying different poems like the villanelle, sestina, and just generally getting involved with the craft and technique. And by the time I had entered college I was very serious about it that this was what I wanted. It was also kind of my way, and I guess everybody finds their own way in the arts or outside the arts, of figuring out life, of grasping what life is all about. It was a kind of knowledge, and it has remained for me a way of experiencing and knowing things I couldn't experience and know in any other way.

CH: So while you were learning to write you were learning about yourself at the same time.

AR: I was writing poems trying to maybe gain some control over experience, which when you're a child or an adolescent it seems like you don't have a lot of control over it. I think later it was letting go of that control, which was producing kind of formal verse for me, and being much more existentialistic, if you will, about what happened in a poem, and letting it take me where it would take me.

CH: So do you think in the majority of things you've written, you worked more intuitively or analytically?

AR: Well, that's a really important question and it's something I've thought a lot about in my life because I broke with formalism at a certain point. I felt that formal structures were not going to anymore be able to contain the experiences I was trying to write about in the way I wanted to write about them. And yet I know that form continues to be a tremendously important aspect of poetry for me but it just hasn't necessarily been that measured, metered, end-rhyme poem. I've just been reading this book by David Gallernta called *The Muse and the Machine*. It's about the poetics of computers, which he feels don't exist yet. He's a very hot-shot computer scientist who's really trying to write about the whole spectrum of human consciousness, which goes from what you might call poetic mode to a highly rational, highly logical mode. And he's very interesting because he talks about how these two modes have been opposed to each other and polarized, and if you have one you don't have the other, or the people in one group don't know anything about the other, and he says it's absolutely a spectrum and that so long as computers are conceived and built that only deal with one end of the spectrum they are not going to be half as effective as if they began to incorporate what we learn from a whole other way of knowing and learning. I haven't finished this book yet so I don't know what he's proposing, and it's very hard for me to imagine, but I'm just interested that a computer scientist is recognizing this because I think it's what goes on when you are in the process of composing a poem. There's a lot of play of the unconscious. It's like dreaming. Almost free associating, letting things well up, not censoring, and at the same time there has to be this critical eye on the whole thing, if not during then at least after you go back, and that's what revision is all about, and its REvision. It's taking those materials and finding out a way for them to convey what they meant to you to someone else in the most effective possible way. I see that as going back and forth on the spectrum really, but you're doing it constantly.

CH: That's something I've tried to deal with lately in my work. I was having trouble because I was becoming very analytical about everything, needing to have the whole idea worked out before I put anything down and I was coming up with nothing. So now I'm trying to be more intuitive and to free associate. A lot of artists that I've talked to have the same kind of problem.

AR: It's a perennial problem and a fascinating one, and when it's really working it's so exciting. You can get so bogged down and take so many wrong turns, but it's finding that synthesis, finding that integration really, which I think is what a poem is. I think a poem is an integration when it's really working; it's integrating pretty much everything we are physically, sensually, intelligence,

memory, other kinds of knowledge. That's why we can't do without it.

CH: As a writer there's also the feeling of, "Why bother writing? All of these ideas have been used already anyway - I've got nothing new to write about." How do you deal with that problem?

AR: Well, that sort of brings to mind this thing that, and you'll appreciate this and you may know it being a painter, Degas said to Mallarme, the French Symbolist poet, "Mon Amis, I have a wonderful idea for a poem." And Mallarme said to Degas, "Mon Amis, poems are not made with ideas they are made with words." Every poem worth its salt is unique. It doesn't matter what the theme, the question, the issue is. It's creating something new through a whole new way of using words, putting words together, combining words and silence really.

CH: Definitely, you always have to deal with the negative space in the painting as well as the positive.

AR: Yes.

CH: I'm particularly curious about your views on the problems with the NEA and this conservative resurgence. We had the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, and we were moving in a certain direction and now people seem wary, like their pulling back. We've even got this computer paranoia. Do you think things are regressing? I know that's a huge topic at one time.

AR: Well, it is a huge topic. I would start by saying it's not just the NEA but the whole contract on America. It's the, I think, total take over of government by corporate interests, so that government, which is supposed to be "of the people, by the people, and for the people," is controlled in so many ways: the congress, the administration, by what works for that one percent of Americans who have, what is it, 40% of the wealth? And who intend to hold on to it and get more of it. And that's what the contract on America is all about, as I see it. It is allowing the rich to get richer and to hell with the rest of us. It's not surprising at all to me that this includes a war against the arts. I mean, you have a war against the poor; you have a war against women; you have a war against people of color and immigrants; and gays and lesbians, goodness knows; and we have a war against the arts, which are perceived as subversive which they are, which are perceived as asking questions that must not be asked because when you ask those questions you open whole cans of worms. So, it all seems to me part of a very dangerous, very disturbing movement. It's something for which I think liberals and radicals, people who were active in the sixties were really illprepared. I think that while many of us question the capitalist system as necessarily being the best possible system, there was not enough general understanding of how the right wing was amassing it's power and building it's base. And doing it in the most American fashion: through school boards, through infiltrating everywhere on a very wide range of levels. I know so many people including myself who have never stopped being active from the sixties on, and who have been doing all kinds of grass roots and not-so-grass roots work: feminists, anti-racists, people fighting for gay and lesbian rights, people fighting for justice in whatever corner they work at any given moment. I guess one of the things that bothers me is that the media is under the control of these corporate

interests. And so we're having blasted at us all the time not only a kind of right wing propaganda or pro-corporate propaganda but also these demeaning, degrading images of humanity, and it's whoever is represented. It's not just women or African-Americans or Latinos or lesbians - it's everybody. Anybody who sits down to a television set is going to see somebody like themselves turned into a clown, a monster, or some kind of a wimp, or a chick, or whatever category we call them. And I don't think that Americans overall are really buying that but it is on the forefront. Sometimes people call this popular culture and I always want to ask, what is real popular culture? Is it something that comes from the top down or something that rises, and I think it's something that rises. I think that's what we're seeing in poetry now, and in a lot of the

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Anybody who sits down to a television set is going to see somebody like themselves turned into a clown, a monster, or some kind of a wimp, or a chick,

arts. We're seeing responses to the present situation that are coming from communities which are very vulnerable, which are under attack, which are using the

or whatever category we call them.

arts as a means of communication and affirmation. And that's true today as it probably never has been in the United States, as it has been in Latin America and other parts of the world. It is something new here, and I find it very thrilling to know the times are very dark. I see a lot of hope in that.

CH: Would you say that it is the government's job to aid this and to fund art with the NEA, and fund public broadcasting and the NEH, or is it up to the artists and the "private" organizations?

AR: Well, I think we're one of the few countries in the world, if not perhaps the only country, that does not have strong arts programs funded by the government, and where the arts are not seen as an essential national resource. I was just at the dedication of a sculpture in my own town of Santa Cruz, CA. It's set up at the harbor and it's quite wonderful, and the sculptor at the dedication talked about what he had intended the sculpture to do. He was Irish, and during his talk he quoted the Irish Minister of Arts, which in itself is an interesting thing, I mean the Irish - its a small poor country - they have a minister of arts, and this minister of arts is quoted as saying, "We have to remember we don't live in an economy we live in a society." And I feel that's a vision that the spokespeople for this government have lost. In a way we're constantly being told that we live in an economy; everything is market market market and every-

thing is defined in terms of its cost. I turn on the television and I see that a painting by Picasso has been sold for the highest price in the history of art auctions. There's nothing about Picasso or art on television on a regular basis. I guess what I feel about the NEA and the NEH is that they have within limits been very important, and I say within limits given who has served on the panels, who has been nominated to nominate the grant recipients, who has been in the air shaloms with public television, public radio determining what programs will or will not air. Hopefully, with well funded NEH and NEA those limits could include much greater diversity than they have up until now and even much greater controversy. But I think it does not serve us to have them undermined all together. One can be critical of the NEH or the NEA but they should be there. They should damn well be there.

One can be critical of the NEH or the NEA but they should be there.

They should damn well be there.

CH: That's an interesting point you made about the Irish Minister of the Arts saying that we live in a society not an economy. I've been researching this for a paper and the Staff Director of the Republican

House Budget Committee in 1994 [Rick May] said we have to keep in mind that art is a luxury . . .

AR: Yes . . .

CH: . . . and I guess that it's not a high priority.

AR: . . . a luxury. And an elite luxury. I mean, this is such bullshit, as I'm sure you know. But the arts is one of the first human activities; before there was class there was art.

CH: Well, look at the Lascaux Cave. When anthropologists and archeaologists want to find out about these other cultures one of the main things they study is the art.

AR: They have to go to the arts.

CH: Some people seem to forget these things once one Mapplethorpe photo comes into their view.

AR: But, you see, all of this is not about couth.

It's about lies: lies which are spoken on television, on radio, in the halls of congress, on the campaign trail, lies to convince people who are not perhaps able to or going to go out and look for proof to the contrary. Very rarely do I agree with our president, but I have to say that when he said it's time for other voices to start to speak out I completely agreed. I agreed before he ever said it, and I've tried to be one of those voices. Most of the people that I care about and work with have tried to be some of those voices. We have not been given a great deal of space and visibility and that's something that he didn't address.

CH: So, where exactly do you work into all of this. The role of women in art has changed so much over the years, how do you as a woman, a poet, an activist fit into the cultural puzzle?

AR: I don't know how I fit in. I feel as if I am part of a very vibrant cultural

Very rarely

life. I don't know if this is something that will work for this interview but let me just describe a few things that were happening before I left California. On one evening I went to a Latino cultural evening in Santa Cruz called Viva

**It is a celebration...
of the necessary relationship
between art and politics.**

Zapata IV. It is a celebration essentially of Latino culture, local and international; a recognition of the Zapatistas Revolution and of the struggles of the peoples in Chiapas

in Mexico; and of the necessary relationship between art and politics. So that was an evening with the folkloric ballads, ballet of Brazil, Sandra Cisneros, an Argentine duo making music. The next night I participated in a multi-cultural reading in the next town over, with student poets from the local schools and regional poets, all of us from diverse backgrounds. The following week I went up to the San Francisco film festival to see the documentary film about Audre Lorde, called *A Litany for Survival: the Life and Work of Audre Lorde*. She would describe herself as a black, lesbian poet warrior, and she died in 1992 after a long struggle with breast cancer - a fabulous poet. This film was made during the last eight years of her life and was opening at the San Francisco film festival. Then the following night I went to an opening of an opera with a libretto by June Jordan, another black poet, called *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky*. The sets were painted by Los Angeles graffiti artists, and the show was about young people in Los Angeles falling in love and struggling and trying to live their lives. So this was a very wonderful series of events which made me feel in a very special way part of a living, active community of artists, of people who have waged political struggles, who are making something happen, and that's really important to me if your asking how I fit in. I have to spend a great deal of my time sitting in a room alone writing, as one does if one writes. So it's that movement back and forth between needing solitude, needing space and time for that, and feeling connected with other people who are creating in other media in other art forms.

**do I agree with our president
but I have to say
that when he said it's time for
other voices to start to speak
out,**

I completely agreed.

My art work, which is mixed media sculpture, has been concerned with architectural images, abstraction and our affiliation

artist statement

BEcoming

part

of the

CONSCIOUSNESS

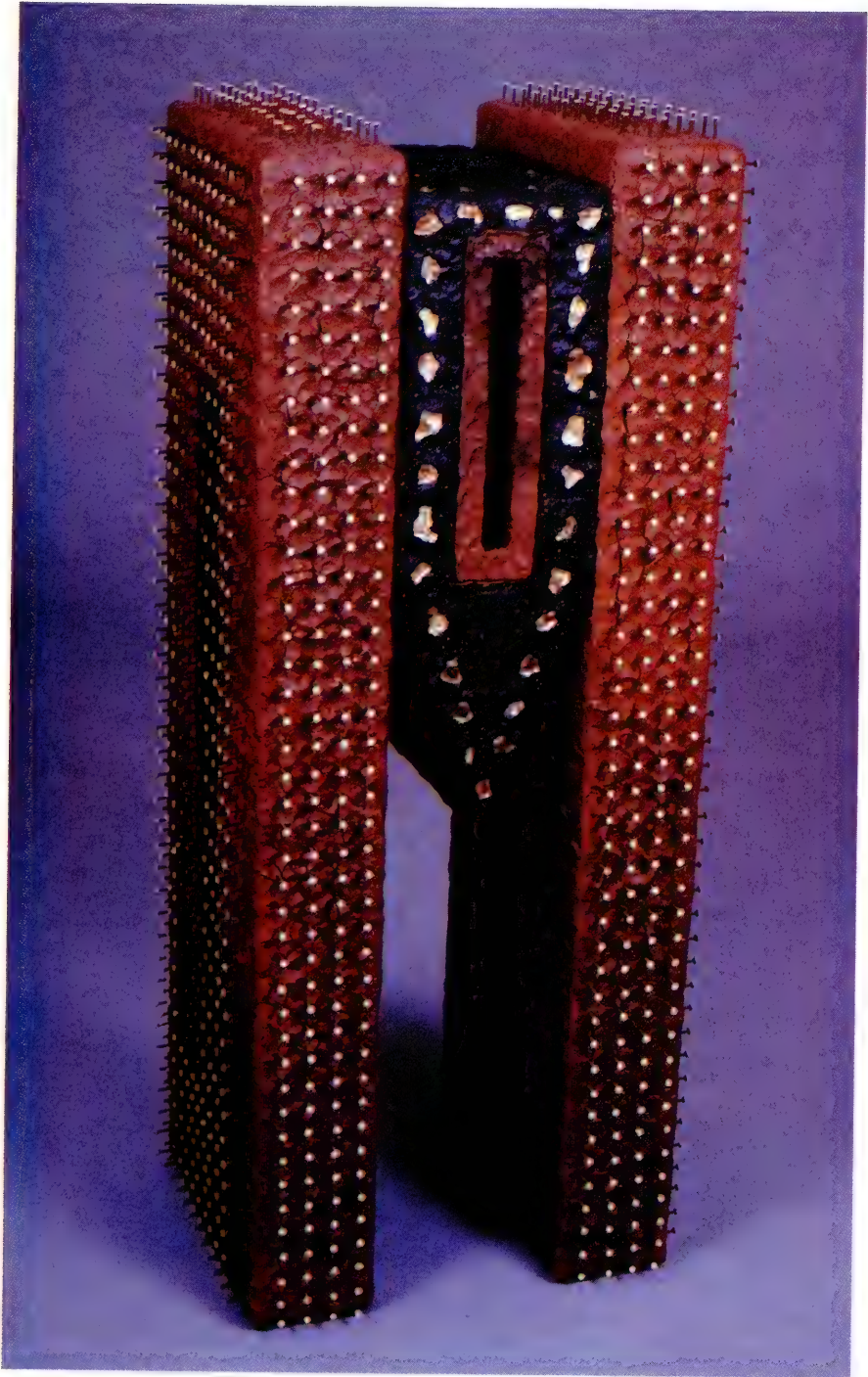
of the earth.

with the planet. I have drawn on references from previous cultures and civilizations, and try to explain my views of the world through the relationship of objects.

My recent work addresses issues regarding the earth and our association to it. It does not solely speak about man achieving dominance over nature, nor is it merely a question of protecting the environment. Rather, I want my sculpture to exist in a larger realm, one that deals with a philosophy for the planet and those of us who live on it.

Scientists are now speaking quite openly about the Gaia Principle, the whole planet as an organism, Mother Earth. If we start thinking of ourselves as coming out of the earth, rather than being put here from some where else, we start becoming part of the consciousness of the earth. In this way we can relate ourselves and the society to the world and the cosmos.

☼ **Robert F. Lyon**



Guillotine Tower. 1987. clay, wood, nails, paint, mica. 45x19x15 inches.



Strata Rescue. 1989. clay, wood, chain, rope. 72x25x25 inches



Marker. 1991. clay, wood, shain. 95x42x42 inches



Earth Elevation, 1989. clay, wood, pigment. 68x16x7 inches



Embowered. 1993. clay, wood, steel. 89x40x13 inches



Untitled Earth. 1990. clay, wood. 96x19x19 inches



Somatologic. 1992. clay, wood. 63x31x20inches.



Cocoon. 1990. wood, twine.. 58x20x20 inches.

The Artistic Man

Linda Da Silva

Michael was a very private man. He was the sort you always wanted to get acquainted with, but, if the occasion ever presented itself, you never got up the nerve. He always smiled, and was the first to say hello, but small talk wasn't his style.

I knew Michael better than most; we were neighbors, and he would often visit. I was amazed when he began opening up to me. We would spend hours at a time debating some controversial, philosophizing, or just sighing over the mishaps of the day. He became my constant; I looked forward to our time together and even came to expect it.

His one secret passion was painting. He didn't tell many people about it because he underestimated his talent. But he could bring to life the dulllest object. I always thought it was his style and technique that made his canvas seem to move. I can remember him once saying it was his colors. He had smiled and looked at me and told me I was a soft peach. I asked him what color he was, and he just laughed and told me to figure it out for myself.

One particular day sticks out in my mind; it was odd from the moment he walked through my door. Breathless, he swept in with ruddy cheeks and a huge grin, like a freshman who had just made the football team and run all the way home to tell his dad. He picked me up off the floor like I was a feather and swung me around. I laughed at his unusual behavior, his childish, red happiness. Finally, he put me down, gentle as always, and proclaimed his news. He had met her. Her. He had decided that she was for him. He would have her. I smiled inside, happy for his happiness, excited because I saw life in his eyes.

Day after day, Michael would tell me of his attempts to win her love. But all he ever really met, he said, was a halfhearted smile and a cold shoulder. I didn't really think he was serious until I noticed a change in him. Not in him, but in his paintings. His once brilliant sunsets and seashores became twisted storms and deranged fields of anger. When I asked him about it, he just gave me a look and told me to mind my own business. Oh, yes. Something was definitely wrong.

Our visits became less frequent; pretty soon it even seemed that he was avoiding me. I missed seeing him smile, and hearing him laugh. I wanted to sit on the porch and talk until the sun went down.

I laughed at his unusual behavior, his childish, red HAPPINESS.

So, one lonely evening, I ventured down the street and knocked on his door. The lights were on in his study; he had transformed it into his art room because of the beautiful view. But after a minute or so of knocking, I realized he wasn't answering. I went around to the back entrance and found the door unlocked. I called his name, but all I heard was my hollow echo. I walked upstairs to the study and knocked on the door. No one answered, so I opened it.

I fell when my knees gave out. I blinked back the tears as my eyes began to burn. The room took on an eerie feeling as even the breeze refused to enter the open window. And lying on the floor, just beyond Michael's fingertips rested his last painting: a brilliant red rose, and one soft peach.

Almost Easter

✶Jeremy M. Downes

We move through a familiar landscape filled with spotted cows,
Holsteins transplanted from north Germany, chewing their cud

despondently under the scrub oaks that line this prairie-edging
scenic-route; you imagine a landscape hiding them, a hedge

that camouflaged those black and white patterns as a leopard
slinks unseen in dappled light. It's almost Easter, you're separated

once again from your family; you still pronounce it with an 'n,'
a crafty German consonant that grafts itself upon the very end

of the holiday you've always loved, a letter squeezed on at the last
by a tongue too German to forget. We drive northwest

across a country I no longer understand, perceiving it through you
as through a bottle-green lens, this third-world melange of far too

many countries, tribal districts built of shoelaces and boot straps
at the point of knife and gun. The rural slums hung with muskrat traps,

the narrow fishing huts in garish reds and yellows recently dragged
from the winter's frozen lakes, all this sculpture of a harsh and bedraggled

America—so perky within its wealth, as idealistic as the heat of poppies
when they bloom, but so damned gangrenous when you come to ponder

its hurting poor, the rot at the expanding, surrounding base.
You kick at imaginary pedals; I, eyes in the mirror, touch the brakes;

a rabbit bolts unscathed across the highway, and I make
some dry comment on how the Easter Bunny's running late.

You kiss me. I kiss you back at 70 miles an hour,
and time skitters by us, hammering our tires

like uneven pavement, its impact disproportionate,
the square of our velocity or some such misappropriated

law of physics. This kills me. This time passing that almost crucifies us
is what I fear and love in you; the more we love, the less this time suffices.

We've driven overnight out of kudzu, sweeping past broom sage, skunk cabbage
into north central prairies—scrub oak, indian paintbrush, prickly ash;

Easter with my family, where there may be snow, and the rosebushes
still covered against frost, and the springing blue spruces that cushion

the sky—prickly, cold, not so rampant as that ubiquitous kudzu
threatening to overtake the car, entangling aluminum wheel covers,

draping itself over the hood like a lazy jungle-dweller, a komodo dragon,
a vine-shadowed tiger, anaconda. Sometimes I wonder at the pageant

of words that randomly pour into poems, as if a lunch-box opened on eggplant
sandwiches, on Easter eggs brightened with grease and painted with animal pageantry:

my childish eyes on those amber millipedes, the stippled sunrise of a trout's urgent
backward leaping, the linked maroon baboons around an eggshell white, emerging

from a polar cap of fern-green jungle and brown roots, twisting into iced equators.
So often we think the same things, over and over, the useful proverb, the cliché or

a suddenly parental turn of phrase; but now and again the cactus blossoms, troubles
the landscape and through our flat language's shimmering diction colors bubble

out of the multiplying dice (the tongue, the pen, electronic web)
into azaleas, orchids, the rest of the blessed hallucination. The concrete slab

aches northwesterly, arches like a rainbow for the climb and fall of our repeating wheels;
I look at you. I tell you I want to break these word-dreams, hunt beneath the shell

for salt, white, yolk. So I clamber back to incident, meaning, the highway smell of skunk
clinging from the night before. And I try to be literal. Aim for a core somewhere sunk

deep, golden. But still that clinging three-toed sloth of a word clings, rummaging
among the ficus plants; or catlike falls into silence and creeps off ambiguous. So I forage

instead in my remembered undergrowth, the jungle of childhood Easters for a jar
of memory I could present to you like a calla lily, jungle orchid, rose. There were

colorings, dyeings, Easter eggs, and hunts, the friendly admiration of
spry, unlikely colors. There was the intricate dismantling of tedious love

and its labors as I tried to take the shell off whole, mapmaker's broken globes, spliced
with membrane. There was salt, then the egg's white; and last the yolk,
which I never liked.



Christy Braswell Reaching black and white monograph

GRAVITY: APRIL 1970: A MEMORY

☞ Jeanie Thompson

The aerodynamic miracle
of the bumble bee as he plunders
blue-stalked salvia this summer morning
holds me like gravity, like the pollen's lure

holds him. But wings lift and he tumbles
forth, appears to wander
among the other blossoms, returning
to the hive to dock there, and deliver his store

When the dazed astronaut Lovell, freed from the orbital
nightmare of a failed mission -- cast asunder
by a ruined coil and twist of fate -- emerged squinting
into the Pacific light, I was still not sure

that I could break the circle,
loose the bonds of home and wander
with myself, among my disparate selves, losing
everything in freedom's release -- weightless, pure

as nothing I knew. What the oracle
I swore I deciphered under
the din of teenaged pain, and the shimmering,
anti-gravitational lure

of stupid youth said was a simple miracle:
home beckons us to break free, like the blossom's plunder
lures the bee, of a summer morning,
to its lovely, blue and fragile shore.

To Be King of the Mountain

 **Jody Schnurrenberger**

The two boys trudged through the field. "It's hot out here," exclaimed the smaller, blond haired boy. "Why don't we stop and rest for a while?"

"I want to find that mountain," explained the older brunette. "It's got to be around here somewhere. Maybe it's on the other side of those trees."

"I don't even think it exists. How could a mountain be magic? Besides, they say it's black magic. I don't think this is such a good idea anymore," said the blond as he slicked his bangs off his forehead. They stuck to his head from the sweat before slowly falling back into place one by one.

"Quit being such a wimp, Ian. You thought this was a great idea this morning. Remember what they said? The king of the mountain will never grow old. I don't want to end up like my grandmother, old, drooling, and can't remember a thing. I don't want to be like that. We've got to find that mountain."

"Can't we look again tomorrow? It's almost lunch time and I want to watch the afternoon cartoons."

"I can't believe you still watch cartoons. Besides, we've looked just about everywhere. It's got to be around here somewhere. We can't give up now," exclaimed the older boy.

The two continued their search as they entered the woods on the edge of the field.

After another twenty minutes of wandering through trees, knocking off dead branches, poking at spider webs, throwing sticks, and doing other boyish things, Ian suddenly ran ahead. "DAVID...LOOK" shouted Ian excitedly.

The lean, tanned thirteen year old ran to meet his best friend who was standing at the edge of the woods. "The Mountain," David whispered reverently. They looked down across the beautiful green meadow that seemed to serve as a grassy moat. Rising above the meadow was a large hill. The grass looked lush and green. Farther up the hill trees dotted it's sides quickly becoming more and more dense. About two thirds of the way up, the trees just stopped. Beyond them there was nothing but dirt and rocks.

"Come on, let's go," David called out as he sprinted down toward the bottom of the grassy moat. Ian chased after him as quickly as he could.

They stood at the bottom of the hill looking up. "It's even bigger and more beautiful than I imagined," said the sinewy twelve year old as he once again slicked his blond hair back away from his face.

"I'll race you to the top," cried David as he began the ascent.

"No fair! You're always faster than me," called Ian as he tried desperately to catch up to his friend.

They ran up the field, through the trees, and then carefully over the rocks as they both progressively became slower. The day's journey had taken its toll on them. By the time they reached the summit, they were both barely able to stand.

"I won," David finally choked out between gasping breaths. They both sat down to regain control of their breathing. Finally, Ian stood up.

"Look, David, it's incredible up here. I bet you can see all the way to

China.” Suddenly the earth had unfolded itself to them. They saw it now as if for the first time realizing its true expanse. Ian stepped up to the top to look over. Although the way they had come was steep and rocky, it wasn’t anything a young boy wouldn’t climb. However, on the other side, the mountain seemed to end. They were standing on the edge of a cliff. Far below there was nothing but rocks and boulders. “David, check it out.”

David looked over the edge. “Cool,” he exclaimed. “We can throw bad people off the cliff to kill them.” Ian nodded.

They began to walk down the side of the mountain planning to systematically explore the whole thing.

“We should name it, David.”

“We should name it ‘David’? Well, if you think that’s a good name for a

We can throw bad people off the cliff to kill them.

mountain, okay,” David smirked.

“Very funny. What do you want to name it?”

“We could name it after our initials so that way, if anyone ever asked, we could say it was ours.”

Ian nodded. That sounded logical.

“D and I, since I’m older.”

Ian thought for a second, “But that spells die. I don’t like that name. How about I and D? Does that spell anything?”

“ID,” David answered wisely. “We studied it in English. Besides, you just want your letter first.”

“Do not. What’s an ID?”

“Umm...Well...I’ll explain it to you when you’re older. It’s too complicated.”

“You always say that. You sound like my dad. You’re not that much older than me. You’re just a year and a month older. Come on, tell me.”

David searched for something resembling an accurate definition. “It’s when you get everything you want.” He then crossed his arms confidently.

“Oh, that sounds like a good thing. I think we should name the mountain ID.”

“Okay,” David answered sullenly. “I still like DI better,” he mumbled under his breath.

When they had finally broken through the bottom of the tree line, they noticed a pool of water a bit further down. “Last one there is a rotten egg,” David called gleefully as he headed toward the pond. Ian groaned, then started after him.

“Hey, Rotten Egg, check it out! This is cool. It’s not very deep and you can see the fish and everything.” David stood in the middle only about chest deep in water, still fully dressed.

Ian stuck his feet in, shoes and all and started to laugh. He walked out about waist deep and started washing the sweat off his arms and face.

David was scanning the bottom. “I’ll catch a fish for you, Ian. You can take it home and tell your mom you caught it with your bare hands.”

The two boys spent the rest of the day playing in and around the pond. They chased fish, skipped rocks, and laughed.

"I'm sorry I couldn't catch a fish for you, Ian," David said regretfully as they headed for home.

"That's okay. Thanks for showing me how to skip rocks, though. I've always wanted to know how to do that."

"Here." David pulled his hand from his soaked pocket. He handed Ian a flat, smooth rock. "It was the best skipping rock I found out there. I wanted you to have it now that you can skip rocks, too."

Ian took the rock. They both blushed a bit. David put his arm around Ian's neck and rubbed his knuckles in his damp hair. "It's only because you couldn't find one that good. You'd better not skip it, though. I gave it to you." Then he took off toward home. Ian smiled and chased after him.

**You'd better not skip it,
though. I gave it to you.**

For the next few weeks, they played around the water and in the grassy fields. They dug holes in the mud, stomped words in the grass, and picked flowers for their mothers before going home. They each brought a sandwich for lunch and occasionally a ball or frisbee to play with. They smiled. They were happy.

"Hey, Ian," called David excitedly. "Come quick!"

Ian hurried over to where David was standing, next to the water.

"Watch this!" David tossed a grasshopper into the pond. It thrashed about for a few seconds, trying to swim back to shore, then suddenly it was gone. All that was left were some rings and stirred up mud from an unseen fish. "You have to look quick. The fish like to sneak up on 'em."

Ian shook his head. "I don't know. That seems awfully mean, and you don't even get to see the fish eat him."

"It's not mean. They don't suffer. It's cool to see a fish move that fast. Quit being such a baby." He playfully knocked Ian toward the water. Ian grabbed his arm and tried to pull David in, losing his balance in the process. He fell into the water bottom first.

"Man, I didn't want to get my shoes wet. I hate walking around in wet shoes."

David smiled at his best friend, splashed him, and took off for the woods.

"Thanks, David," yelled Ian sarcastically. "Where are you going?" He watched David disappear into the trees. Ian grudgingly stood up and started after him.

"Hey, Ian, come here. It's much cooler in the woods."

"These woods are kind of creepy and they have too many stickers." Ian peered timidly into the dark woods. Vines hung low and insects could be heard buzzing from plant to plant.

"You are such a baby. Come on. It'll be fun. We can build forts and tree houses." David motioned for his friend to follow him. Ian came.

Although at first Ian did so with considerably less enthusiasm than David, the two boys played among the shadows of trees. They marked trails, climbed the trees, and picked the site for their first fort.

The two worked for many days on their "Super Fort." David gathered branches as Ian was sent on excursions to the pond to get mud to cover the cracks. "I'm sick of always having to go get the mud. You get the next load, David."

"You know I can't. Mom would kill me if I got all muddy."

"My mom is getting pretty mad too."

"Yeah, but she's already mad. There's no point in getting my mom mad too. Besides, I can carry bigger branches than you so the fort will be bigger."

Ian thought about this for a moment and then with a sigh, headed back to the pond. When he got there, he stared into the water for a moment, watching the peaceful fish. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the stone his friend had given him. Ian bent down to the water and washed it off. After he was sure all the mud was gone, he put it safely back in his pocket and began to gather more mud.

"Get out!"

"But it's my fort too. I helped build it," Ian stated angrily.

"You can't come in! And it's not a fort. It's a castle."

"I don't want to play in the woods anymore. It's not as much fun as the fields and pond. Come on let's go play down there." Ian started toward the sunlight.

"Baby," David called. "Get back here! Don't leave! Okay, I'll help you build a fort too. Come back," David called in desperation.

"Okay, but you have to help me build a fort."

For the next few weeks, they played in the woods. They chased squirrels, Ian began construction on his fort, and David gathered moss to decorate his castle. They smiled. David was happy.

The sweat shone on Ian's face as he marched his way slowly up the hill carrying as much mud as he could in a bucket he'd brought from home. He stopped at the edge of the trees to rest. When he sat the bucket down, he noticed David about a hundred feet away, crouched down and holding a stick. As he tried to wipe the sweat from his face without getting all muddy, Ian watched David intently. Finally, curiosity got the best of him.

"Hey, David, what are you doing?" Just then there was a rustle of leaves about ten feet in front of David. David stood up and with a fierce look in his eyes, rushed toward Ian, the stick cocked back as a weapon.

"YOU STUPID IDIOT!" David's eyes burned Ian's heart. "I was trying to kill that squirrel!" As David approached with the stick, Ian took a fearful step back. David reached the edge of the field. He slowly lowered the stick, almost appearing surprised at himself. "I wanted to catch it and eat it. I've heard squirrels taste good." His voice was quieter but eyes still looked angry from deep within. He turned around and started back up through the trees. He looked back for a moment, "And don't ever do that again!" Ian watched his friend disappear into the shadow of the woods.

For the next few days Ian continued to work on his fort but progress was slow. "David," he called to his friend one day, "you promised to help me build my fort. I need your help."

"I never promised, and I said I would help and I did. I told you that you

were doing it wrong and I tried to explain why. It's not my fault you're so stupid. Besides, the woods are getting boring. I want to go play in the rocks."

"But there's nothing up there but rocks. Let's go down to the pond and go swimming."

"No, we're going up to the rocks to play." David struck out for the barren land ahead. Ian followed.

"See? Isn't it cool up here? We can see everything. It's great." David started gleefully dancing among

the rocks. Ian sat down on the edge of the woods. His head was down as he played with a shoe lace, poking it into various lace holes in his shoe. He looked to watch this strange boy as he sang to himself and danced a wicked dance. Ian missed the June days they'd spent in the field.

"Get up. Break time's over. Get back to work." David kicked the bottom of Ian's shoe to get him up.

"But I'm tired. I'm going down to the pond to get some water."

"I said break time is over," David stated angrily.

"I don't care, I'm thirsty." Ian's heart pounded with uncertainty as he got up and started down the mountain. David's stare blistered Ian's back but he continued downward.

By the time Ian reached the water's edge, there were tears of frustration in his eyes. He knelt down in the mud to wash the dirt, sweat, and tears from his face. He stared at his reflection in the water. A gentle breeze kept him from seeing his true self as his young face was warped and twisted on the water's surface. He took the stone he'd been given so long ago and held it tightly in his hand. He closed his eyes and wished for his best friend to return.

"Whacha doin'?" A cold voice from behind Ian startled him so badly he dropped the skipping stone. David bent over to pick it up. "You still have this thing?" David's voice had softened a little. Ian nodded a slow, uncertain nod.

"Can I have it back?"

"You know, this is the best skipping rock I've ever found," David said, ignoring Ian. "I bet it could skip at least five or six times."

"Give it back, David...please?"

David took a step back and gave it a halfhearted toss. "Gee, I guess I was wrong. It only skipped three times."

Ian lunged at David screaming, "I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!"

David stepped to the side and pushed Ian to the ground. "Be back in ten minutes," he said flatly. David turned and strode upward to his domain.

Ian sat at the water's edge crying, "I hate him! I hate him," as he threw handfuls of mud into the water.

For the next few weeks, they played among the rocks that dotted the barren

I told you that you were doing it wrong and I tried to explain why.

It's not my fault you're so stupid.

landscape. Ian worked on a stone wall to protect the fortress, he dug a hole for a well so they wouldn't have to go down to the pond so much, and David practiced throwing rocks at trees to work on his aim. David smiled. David was happy.

Ian watched David as he wandered around searching under various rocks. Ian walked over and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"A snake."

"Why?"

"So I can kill it and wear it as a belt."

"But you already have a belt."

"You are so stupid, Ian. Leave me alone."

Ian felt an empty anger inside. "I hope you don't find one," he said quietly as he walked away. Just then, a rock pelted him in the back of the head. He heard David laugh as if he had just heard a funny joke. Tears welled up from the sting of both. "I don't want to play with you anymore," Ian cried.

"You have to. You don't have a choice. Go finish my wall before I hit you with an even bigger rock." David bent down and picked up a rock the size of a baseball. Ian ran and hid behind the wall, sobbing.

Time wore on. Those August seemed the longest Ian had ever encountered. He worked hard to carry out David's grandiose plans. David had mapped out what was virtually a city in the rocks. He had rocks lined up to show the boundaries of what was to be his castle, stables, swimming pool, hospital, hotel, and servant's quarters. The work would be long and hard but he had a faithful laborer.

The two boys sat against the stone wall. "Do you know what tomorrow is?" David's voice had lost some of its usual harshness. There seemed to be just a hint of fear in his

eyes. "It's my birthday...I'll be fourteen."

He sat for a moment.

"This mountain is supposed to keep me from growing old. I

don't understand." Ian sat quietly. David stood up. "What's wrong with you, you stupid mountain," he called out. An echo gently mocked him. "I don't want to grow old! What kind of magic is this? Don't you see my plans for a castle?" David paused. "Maybe the mountain doesn't know which one of us is king," David said turning to Ian. Suddenly, David jumped up. "First one to the top is King of the Mountain!" David raced for the top as he never had before.

Ian scrambled to his feet and gave chase. Then he realized it. "David! Stop," cried Ian frantically as he rushed helplessly after David.

"I'm faster than you! I'm the winner! I'm the winner," shrieked David laughingly as he increased the gap between he and Ian.

"David! Please! The cliff!"

"I'll never grow old! I'm King of the Mountain!" David shouted happily as he raced to the summit.

David disappeared. A childlike scream echoed terror against Ian's ears. Then there was silence.

"I don't want to grow old! What kind of magic is this? Don't you see my plans for a castle?"

ON A BANK OF THE TENNESSEE RIVER

late August

✿ Jeanie Thompson

While the sun stains
the still river blood-red
as a tapped vein,
I drag the canoe onto shore,
and with afternoon my accomplice,
study plunder. Sifted loose
by summer rain, the past
uncovers itself
by shard and broken point,
by flint worked
to an almost useful shape.

Lifting a black clay fragment
I trace the net pattern etched there,
feel the electric pulse
of human touch.
The pile of contraband
in the stern grows: scraper, bird
point, a piece of human skull,
reminders that
water cannot claim
forms humans made:
vessels someone shaped
and learned to shatter.



Christy Braswell Collective Souls black and white monoprint



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